

I support media diversity

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to comment on Docket No. 02-277, The Biennial Review of the FCC's broadcast media ownership rules which strives to promote competition, diversity and localism. I strongly believe that the FCC should retain all of the current media ownership rules now in question.

I work as a social worker for Head Start and work with low-income families and working class families. Every individual I have talked with is appalled at the possibility of lifting the current media ownership rules. They do not trust the corporate media to report on their situation as low-income people because their struggles do not sell. They feel that there is no existing media that represents them. Furthermore, corporate media's true customers are advertisers, not the people who watch or listen to their station. Media consolidation will only increase the lack of localism to corporate media represents.

When the World Trade Towers fell during 9/11, the Mariott Hotel also collapsed resulting in the displacement of 600 workers. After a public announcement by the CEO of the Mariott Corporation to help the workers they did nothing to give the workers compensation or new jobs. The Mariott Corporation received millions of dollars in federal aid to rebuild their corporation. They used this money to build two new hotels and still did not rehire the workers. The lack of media response, especially by the New York Times and the Washington Post was due to the financial interest they held with the Mariott Corporation. In one article in the New York Times they did not mention the responsibility of the Mariott to their workers, instead they made it seem as though it was an disagreement between the an labor rights group, NMASS and the union. However, when you looked through the pages of the New York Times there was a full-pages Mariott ad. (For more information see <http://www.nmass.org/nmass/justice/wtcm.html>) The responsibility of the media is to report the truth not hide information so their advisors will remain the positive in the public eye.

I feel that the corporate media's coverage of the war on Iraq was greatly censored and as a result I had to read news from other countries to learn what was really happening in the Middle East. Anti-war demonstrations were underreported and numbers were grossly underestimated. An anti-war TV that was supposed to be aired during the state of union address was pulled off of a local Comcast. The rights of immigrant mostly of Muslim and Middle Eastern decent have repeatedly has their right violated by the unconstitutional Patriot Act including deporting, holding without charges and stripping the right to a speedy trial and a right to a lawyer. The vast majority of Americans do not know about this reality and the corporate press is not reporting it. If the corporate media is given the green light to consolidate and the alternative press is further bought out where will the American people get accurate information? Reporters have an essential responsibility to the public to report the truth even if it is unpopular or make the US look bad or violent. How can we influence our country's role in the world if we do not have the correct information or the correct picture. We have a right to information and a right to the truth.

The distribution of media should be democratic not controlled by large corporations whose self-interest is based on profit not truth. The consolidation of media will limit competition because as they expand they will buy out smaller struggling, alternative sources of media, thus

downsizing diversity. The less choice the less diversity of ideas, music and images. As Americans we have a right to hear all sides of a story, that is the richness of democracy and free-press. Please keep this tradition alive.

Thank you,

Emma Gerould, Family Service Worker